



Union of Arab Jurists



GENERAL ASSEMBLY HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL 21st Session

Item 1 – Organizational and procedural matters

Concluding remarks

I thank you Madam President,

I speak on behalf of Badil, MRAP, ISMUN, North-South XXI, Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies and Union of Arab Jurists.

We would like to thank the Council for the opportunity to draw attention to an issue of great concern, and one which brings into question the very purpose of the Council itself.

In March 2012, the State of Israel withdrew its participation from the Human Rights Council and subsequently declared the prevention of a UN investigatory team – tasked with assessing the impact of unlawful settlements upon Palestinian rights - from accessing Israel and the OPT, labeling the mission 'surrealistic' and 'superfluous'.

The response from the Council has been to criticize these actions. Nonetheless, in our opinion this response falls far short of what is required given the magnitude of Israel's actions, and provides little incentive for those UN member states accused of rights abuses to constructively address such accusations. This has significant repercussions for vulnerable populations, as members will note that should they face accusations of rights abuses, they can simply disengage from the Council and avoid further censure, despite a clear disregard for international law.

Without stringent enforcement, the UN Charter becomes meaningless, and the precedent set by the Council's response to Israel's actions fundamentally undermines the level of rights protection afforded to vulnerable individuals. The Council has, in theory, the potential to vastly improve the global human rights landscape, but in practice, its failure to apply meaningful sanctions calls into question its utility as a force for genuine change.

Accordingly, and in light of Article 103 and Article 4 of the UN Charter, we call upon the Council to administer suitable, proportionate sanctions against the State of Israel so as to demonstrate that failing to adhere to the UN Charter brings with it meaningful punishment. Failure to do so will effectively render the Council redundant and serve only to encourage future rights abuses both within the OPT, and further afield.

28 September 2012